

Equality and Diversity Council Meeting Paper

30th January 2015

Communications Subgroup

Purpose and context

The Equality and Diversity Council provides visible and robust leadership on equality and health inequalities issues across health and social care. The Council has agreed the need for a collaborative approach in communicating the work of the EDC and its key messages to the wider health and care system, and beyond.

Action taken to date

Key EDC messages and an EDC Communications Strategy has been drafted and agreed upon by EDC members.

To date, communications support has been provided for a number of EDC activities including:

- Re-launch of the EDC
- Launch of EDS2 at the London NHS Values Summit
- EDC system alignment session at the 2014 Health and Social Care Expo
- System leaders signing the Statement of Declaration on promoting equality and tackling health inequalities
- Inclusion of the proposed Workforce Race Equality Standard and the Equality Delivery System for the NHS – *EDS2*, within the NHS contract 2015/16 consultation

Current communication mechanisms for the EDC include:

- An EDC webpage – providing background and information to the Council and where EDC material including minutes of meetings and membership details can be found
- An active EDC twitter account
- An email account for communicating to EDC members and beyond

Current position

A virtual communications group has been brought together. This group is composed of identified communication officers from the major health and care organisations represented on the EDC (including NHS Employers, Health Education England, NHS England, Department of Health, Foundation Trust Network). In an advisory role, EDC member Henry Bonsu is part of the virtual communications group. The purpose of the group is to facilitate the dissemination of consistent and timely EDC messages across the health and care sector.

This group will have a key role to communicate, in a collaborative way, the work of the EDC subgroups, including (but not restricted to):

- work on equality and the workforce, including the roll-out and implementation of the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES);
- the consistent implementation of the Equality Delivery System – *EDS2*;
- plans for equality data standard development;
- future direction of the EDC and its programme of work

Key risks

The absence of consistent communications messaging is likely to have a negative impact upon:

- Positively positioning the EDC as a body of influence in promoting equality and tackling health inequalities within the NHS and beyond;
- Improving understanding of how people's differences, cultural expectations and social status can affect their experiences, health outcomes and quality of care and how EDC can help shape that process;
- Keeping the wider system updated on the current and future work programme of the EDC and how it aligns with key policy levers;
- Timely promotion and communications coverage of EDC products such as the Workforce Race Equality Standard and the Equality Delivery System for the NHS – *EDS2*, both of which are scheduled to be included in the NHS standard contract from April 2015.

Next steps

- Virtual communications group to meet during January 2015 to scope EDC communications messaging for the period January-March 2015.

Recommendation and action requested

For the EDC to note the above.

**EDC Virtual Communications Group
January 2015**